

# An Interview with Grant Schnarr about his new book *You Can Believe!*

by Nancy Lee

## **What is the book about?**


**Grant:** It is about reconnecting people with spirituality and God. It's not just a self help book. It has meat, doctrinal ideas to chew on. For vegetarians, think of a good hearty vegetable soup! All the flavor and substance.

## **The book covers the basic questions of life. What are some of these?**

**Grant:** Who is God? Why am I here? What am I supposed to do while I'm here? How is God working in my life right now? Where will I go when I die? Is the world going to come to an end? Do I need to do something while I'm here? Am I evil? Am I good? What am I? How can I be happy? These are a lot of questions I find many people ask. I feel like the difference between this book and others is that it doesn't offer fairy tale or comic book answers about angry gods and super heroes and silly passwords which will get you into heaven, like asserting one's faith or carrying the right membership card. The answers are for the most part common sense, but with a twist.

## **What do you mean "with a twist?"**

**Grant:** The book dares to point to certain teachings, doctrines, tenets of belief. It's not a "Truth is relative: Believe what you want" book. You can believe what you want, but this book does assert that some beliefs are more true, or present reality in a clearer way than other beliefs. You'll find new ideas to believe in within this book.



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**How does this book fit with your other books such as *Spiritual Recovery*, or *The Art of Spiritual Warfare*?**

**Grant:** Both of these books are about the practice of spirituality, and leave most of the belief system of the individual up to the individual. I give some advice, for example, how to combat dysfunction and overcome the negative self, but don't talk much about where that negative self comes from, or who the higher power may be that helps us. That's left for the individual to decide -- the old adage "God as you understand God." This book is different. This book is about belief. Hence the title - "You Can Believe!" It compares beliefs, some which seem to work in life and some which don't work so well, and then offers a new idea, a new belief to consider. These new beliefs are based on the teachings of Emanuel Swedenborg's religious books and philosophy. They aren't mine, but I do flesh them out with examples and illustrations from modern life.

**Who is Swedenborg?**

**Grant:** He was an Eighteenth Century scientist and theologian. He wrote 35 volumes of religious and spiritual material in the latter part of his life. Much of what his message is about is that religion can make sense. A lot of American religions have roots in Swedenborg's teaching, as well as the recovery movement, and Jungian philosophy. He has also had a great influence on literature and the arts in America, even though he was Swedish born and lived much of his life in England, where all of his books were published. A group of students of his works started a church based on the Bible and his works about ten years after his death, and it's been around ever since. I'm an assistant pastor for the Bryn Athyn Cathedral, in Pennsylvania, which is the home of the world-wide New Church administration, and also home of the Bryn Athyn College of the New Church, and the Academy of the New Church High School. You can learn more about Swedenborg, the New Church, and all these at [www.newchurch.org](http://www.newchurch.org).

**Why this book now?**

**Grant:** Most of my books have been practical self help books on spiritual growth. I wanted to write a book for my church which explains the what behind the how. In other words, it was time to write a book about my roots and the helpful beliefs that have been a foundation for my other books. Also, this is the clearest and simplest explanation of Swedenborgian thought do date. I say that from humility. I don't try to explain every little detail, but take the simple and pastoral approach. There are a lot of more in-depth books out there, and 200 or 300 level books, but this is truly a book for inquirers into this faith and for beginners. That's why I wrote it.



For more information on Grant Schnarr, visit his website at [www.GrantSchnarr.com](http://www.GrantSchnarr.com)